



Male on lookout duty

The City Peregrine Falcons 20007

By

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This year things were a lot more relaxed, as the birds had done so well last year. All relevant people and authorities now have the blueprint on how to handle these spectacular birds who find breeding here to their liking. Dave felt that he need not go down to the site as much as he had done last year. He instead enlisted one of the nearby residence, who was able to view the birds from the comfort of their front room. As usual Dave new almost to the day when the birds had laid their first egg and when he was likely to get his first glimpse of a chick on the nest ledge. This was going to be a good year, with four young hatching. As I have mentioned in previous tales of these birds he holds the schedule 1 license for these birds in this area of London. This means that under certain circumstances, if he felt it was necessary to go anywhere near the nest ledge he is licensed to do so. His observing of the birds is in no way causing any distress, if he thought that the birds were uncomfortable or agitated in any way he would leave his vantage point. These birds though have got used to this figure, which they have seen thousands of times while undertaking his lonely vigil, on the odd occasion even perching above his head. Dave had calculated that the date for the first male to fledge was approaching, so I too went down to watch. Two pairs of eyes trained eyes make finding a fledged bird much easier. Though Dave has this uncanny knack of picking out birds perched on a roofs or a ledge much better than I. The day before Dave had been informed that the female was being very vocal, Peregrines are not shy and can be heard calling above the noise of a busy London. This may have been nothing to worry about. We approached our view point at 5.30am; though it was June the temperature was a little chilly. I now make sure that I have enough layers on, as we could be in for a long wait. Everything looked peaceful; the female was on one of her favourite perches and the male on another. We got into positions that allowed us to watch the ledge with the young on. We were relieved to see that all four were still on their. They were now fully feathered; the sex ratio

looked like three males and a female. She was the only bird that had a few tufts of down on parts of her body. The males looked as if they were ready to go at any moment, with lots of energetic wing flapping. We had been there for about 45 minutes when the male left his perch and flew off to the north-east. No sooner had he left, he was back again. He had brought a prey item presumably one that he had cached close by. Then in the sky above us the female was calling agitatedly. It was time to hide ourselves from view; hopefully she would then go back and settle down. It was unusual for her to behave like this, as we were quite some distance away from the nest. Her calling carried on for some time, it was decided that we would leave her in peace, the main thing was that all four young were still present and at this moment safe. Later that day Dave spoke to one of the tenants of a nearby development. They remarked how that had noticed people larking about on the roof recently. This was meant to have been a secure area, only accessed by means of a key obtained from security. This was not good news. Dave decided that he would take a few days leave and watch the birds from another point. The next morning at least three of the birds had fledged; two of them were located on building close by, the only one left on the ledge was the female. However after much searching, and asking to get up on to roofs there was no sign of the fourth bird. Over the course of the next few days the three young gained in confidence and were able to get back to the nest ledge without too many problems. The fourth bird was never seen again, though there were a couple of reports from further east that may have been him. This may or may not have been him. In July the RSPB opened their Peregrine Watch Point down on the banks of the Thames by the Tate Modern. In our opinion it was a few weeks too late as the young by this stage would be less inclined to stick with the parents.



Four youngsters on the ledge

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